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Memorials: to clean or not to clean?

BRAMM advise that Burial Authorities should provide guidance to grave owners on how best to clean a Memorial. The starting point has to be – is cleaning necessary? Cleaning potentially risks damage - gilded lettering may get scratched or the surface of the stone may be abraded. It is natural for some stone types to darken with age and weathering.

If cleaning is appropriate, it is best to start gently with water and soft cloths or a sponge. High pressure washing can substantially damage the memorial and erode joints, and the ingress of water could result in the failure of joints via the freeze/thaw action – making the memorial unstable.

If the grave owner wishes to use a business offering cleaning services, the Burial Authority should insist that a Memorial permit application is completed, showing the grave owner's consent and details of who is to undertake the work and how. The Authority should ensure that the business undertaking the work has adequate Public Liability Insurance and ask for details of their safe working practice and methodology. BRAMM only registers Memorial Masons who are accredited and does not recommend or assess Memorial cleaning businesses. As you will be aware, renovation work that involves anything other than cleaning, eg refixing part or all of the memorial, must only be undertaken by suitably qualified memorial masons and in line with the current British Standard 8415. Click here for the link to BRAMM Best Practice:

<https://www.bramm-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BRAMM-Best-Practice-Document.pdf>



Careless
cleaning can
easily
damage
Memorials.



Acrylic Grave Surrounds—coming to a graveyard near you?

BRAMM was recently contacted by an accredited Memorial Mason concerned about adverts on Facebook for grave surrounds constructed of man-made materials. Further investigation highlighted a number of businesses advertising small memorials, grave surrounds or kerb sets manufactured in black acrylic. Though every Burial Authority has their own Cemetery Rules and Regulations it is very common that the Rules only permit memorials made of naturally quarried stone, and may set out that this includes granite, marble, slate, sandstone and limestone of sound quality. The Rules and Regulations may specifically exclude artificial stone, ceramic, plastic or any other material that is inappropriate as it simply will not withstand the weather or is generally unsuitable. When reviewing your Rules and Regulation you may wish to add more details to state what is and is not acceptable so that families understand what can be put in place and issues can be avoided. Families are buying the acrylic memorials online and then find they are not suitable. Regular cemetery checks should reveal if any inappropriate surrounds have been installed.



Please click on the link to see a basic test of the strength of the thin acrylic material, that may appear to resemble black granite:

[Acrylic v Granite - the BRAMM test \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Upcoming Online Training Courses

Cemetery Management and Compliance: 1/2Oct, and 5/11Nov

Sexton Duties Course: 12 Sept and 14 Nov

Exhumation of Human Remains: 26 July, 23 Aug and 18 Oct

Exclusive Rights of Burial: 17/18 Sept and 19/20 Nov

Public Health Funerals: 9 Aug and 25 Oct

ICCM and Cruse Loss and Bereavement Awareness: 15 Aug and 24 Oct

Establishing & Managing Gardens of Remembrance: 1 Aug and 17 Oct

Onsite Courses - Management of Memorials - Inspection workshops: various dates July– October 2024

Click here for more information: [Other Training \(iccm-uk.com\)](https://www.iccm-uk.com)



Grave Memorabilia—BRAMM Best Practice Guide

We have all doubtless seen gifts and decorations adorning the grave of a much-loved family member, and from time to time watched as a tribute tumbles in the breeze around the cemetery in a less than respectful manner.

But what can be done to ensure that there is a balance between cemetery visitors, for whom the memorabilia are a significant part of the grieving process, and the Cemetery Rules and Regulations which have to be mindful of health and safety provisions, and of a respectful last resting place?

BRAMM has put together a Best Practice Guide to assist Burial Authorities in their management of what can be a difficult and highly emotive issue. The Guide is freely available to download here: <https://www.bramm-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/BRAMM-Best-Practice-Document.April-24pdf.pdf>



BRAMM representatives invited to Blackpool Winter Gardens



Brent Stevenson, the Honorary Executive Director of BRAMM, and his wife Karen were honoured to represent BRAMM at the Cremation Society of Great Britain and the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities joint Annual Dinner at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool in the opulent Spanish Hall.

The FBCA is the UK's principal representative of Burial and Cremation Authorities. The Cremation Society was established in 1874 and is the pioneer of cremation in Great Britain, having built and operated the very first public crematoria in Woking, Surrey in 1885.



Why Register with BRAMM?

BRAMM was founded in 2004 with the aim of establishing a recognised uniform standard of workmanship to meet the requirements of BS 8415 in all burial grounds throughout the UK. There is no charge to Burial Authorities to join the Register, and the benefits to the Authority are significant in terms of the safety assurance offered by our Registered Memorial Masons. BRAMM simply require Burial Authorities to ensure that:

- all Memorials are erected to the current British Standard 8415.
- the Authority recognises the BRAMM Register and allows BRAMM accredited masons to erect safe Memorials in their cemeteries.

BRAMM (which is significantly the largest Register of Accredited Memorial Masons and Burial Authorities in the UK) will maintain an up-to-date register of Accredited Memorial Masons who have public liability insurance and are required to fix memorials in compliance with the BS 8415. BRAMM will also provide FREE technical advice.

For a Burial Authority to be a BRAMM Burial Authority they simply have to ask that new Memorials are erected safely (in compliance with the current BS 8415) and that the mason/fixers are registered with BRAMM.

BRAMM is fully supported and endorsed by the leading industry organisations:

- ICCM—Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management,
- FBCA—Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities,
- SLCC—Society of Local Council Clerks.
- CWGC—Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The above organisations have equal representation and sit alongside independent Memorial Masons on the BRAMM Board to ensure fair, transparent and non-biased discussion and decision making.

Joining the BRAMM Register is a commitment to promoting safety in your Cemetery.



Thank you to Patrick Davies

Retiring after 20 years of service, Pat has been with BRAMM since the very early days of the organisation.

After working as an Assessor, Pat took on the role of providing Internal Quality Assurance, a key role in maintaining the quality of accreditation expected of BRAMM.

Now Pat is 80, he has taken the decision the time is right to retire. BRAMM presented Pat with a glass trophy in honour of his valued contribution to BRAMM, and a bottle of whiskey. Flowers were also sent to Mrs Davies.

Everyone at BRAMM wishes you all the best for your retirement Pat!

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Contacting BRAMM

We'd love to hear from you!

Email:

bramm@bramm-uk.org

Call: 01452 346741

BRAMM

British Register of Accredited
Memorial Masons

381 Preston Old Road
Blackburn
BB2 5LL